

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

MEL CULBERTSON, Tuba

with

SUSAN CULBERTSON, Piano

DAVID KIRK, Tuba

MAXIME DUHEM, Tuba

and students of the Shepherd School

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Fantasia No. 1
for Tuba and Piano (1991)

Søren Hyldgaard

Andante

Richard Strauss

Kerlouan

Thierry Thibault

Bourrée d'Auvergne
Chanson d'Alsace

Paul Bazelaire

Romance

Elizabeth Raum

INTERMISSION

Batipopo Duo

Xavier Denis

Elite Syncopations

Scott Joplin

Variations in Olden Style

Thomas Stevens

Maxime Duhem, tuba

Jazz improvisations, to be announced

Polarities (2005)
(for two antiphonal brass quintets)

Jim Self

Mel Culbertson, conductor

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

BIOGRAPHY

MEL CULBERTSON JR. was born in 1946 in Wheeling, West Virginia, the second of five children. His father, a construction specialist and master mechanic, filled the Culbertson home with beautiful music he played on the fiddle, mandolin, and guitar. Young Mel learned to play by ear the melodies that he heard on all these folk instruments. He began the study of piano at age six and took up the trumpet three years later. Mel became intrigued with the sousaphone after watching fanfares and parades and begged his music teacher to study the large instrument. He was discouraged by his instructor who told him his lips were too thin for the large mouthpiece. It was not until the family moved to Ventura, California, that Mel was able to satisfy his curiosity. Fortunately, his new music teacher, Robert Barnum, also had a great love and respect for this king of low brass instruments and recognized the talent of his young student.

Mel became the tuba soloist of the Ventura County Symphony Orchestra at the age of fourteen. He also performed under the baton of Lukas Foss in the Ojai Festival Orchestra. Mel's high school years, under the direction of Larry Weiss, found him earning the first-chair positions in the All-Ventura County Honor bands, and at seventeen he was chosen again as the first chair tuba player in the All-State High School Honor Band. He was, at this young age, one of the founding members of both the Ventura County and Los Angeles County Brass Ensembles. Through his efforts, a music analysis class was created at his high school, a variation of which is still taught today.

Mel also received the second and later first prize in the All-Musical Instrument Competition (Phi Mu Alpha) competing with candidates throughout the state of California. He was given a personal invitation and awarded a scholarship to perform with the Idyllwild Music Camp Orchestra.

Having received numerous scholarships in both music and wrestling, Mel chose to attend the University of California at Long Beach and began private tuba lessons with Roger Bobo, tubaist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. While at the university, he played with the Long Beach Municipal Band. Mel also performed in the Long Beach Symphony concerts.

The war in Vietnam pressed Mel into military service, and he accepted a position in the elite West Point Military Academy Band. While at West Point, he performed in numerous chamber music series and premiered the *Jessie Suite* by Alec Wilder. Mel enrolled in the Juilliard School of Music which was in close proximity to West Point. Mel performed his second tuba recital in Carnegie Hall. During that period of time he studied with Arnold Jacobs, the world renowned tubaist of the Chicago Symphony, andragogue and pedagogue for wind instruments. It was also in New York

where Mel met Harvey Phillips, the most sought-after tuba player on the east coast. Following his Juilliard studies, Mel was persuaded by Mr. Phillips to move to Boston and further his education at the New England Conservatory of Music. He studied with Harvey Phillips and Chester Schmitz, professor of tuba at the conservatory and tubaist of the Boston Symphony.

Beside Roger Bobo and Tommy Johnson, Mel became a tuba tester for the Los Angeles based Mirafone company directed by Howard Lockie.

Zubin Mehta, conductor of the Israel Philharmonic at that time, invited Mel to audition for him at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and as a result, offered him the solo tuba position in his orchestra in Tel Aviv. Due to the political unrest in the Middle East, newly married, and anxious to travel to Europe he declined that position. Mel returned to California for a short time to do some Hollywood film studio work while he prepared for a trip to Germany.

SUSAN CULBERTSON, a California native, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California at Long Beach as a student of Dorothy Judy Klein. She has lived abroad since 1970, and has concertized extensively throughout Scandinavia, America, and Europe. She is a professor of piano at two music schools in Bordeaux, France. Mrs. Culbertson also maintains a large class of private students, many of whom have won prizes at international competitions.

Open to the public

Wednesday, October 1

Tuba master class: 12:00–2:00 p.m.

Brass master class: 7:30–9:30 p.m.

Hirsch Orchestra Rehearsal Hall



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